

VILLEROY;

OR, THE

FATAL MOMENT.



VILLEROY;

OR, THE

FATAL MOMENT:

A

NOVEL,

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY A LADY.

VOL. II.

L O N D O N:

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VILLEROY;

OR, THE

FATAL MOMENT.

MISS MORDAUNT

TO

MISS BEVIL,

AS I think you will find pleasure in that which makes me happy, I lose no time in acquainting you, that my friend and patroness is out of danger, —poorly would words express my gratitude

VOL. II.

B

tude to the Supreme Being for this blessing; but where my tongue fails me, the thankful humility of my heart shall make amends.—Ah! Harriet, had you known the pangs I felt at the idea of an eternal separation from one, whose uncommon kindness and many virtues had bound me to her, with more than selfish affection, you would not have trifled with my feelings, as you did in your strange letter, a strange one it surely was, and a strange girl you certainly are, when not even a sense of your own disaster, can make you serious for one half hour: perhaps you are too great a philosopher to be disconcerted by the things of this world—No! that cannot be, because you were very much disturbed, that a Countess had grown old, and no better pleased with an honourable gentleman

gentleman

gentleman for being young—Were it the privilege of the nobility to inherit perpetual youth with their titles, they would indeed be valuable.—Poor Harriet! it was certainly very mortifying after all the pains you had taken to procure admirers, that not one was to be had.—I should have thought in your desperate state, the Knight, notwithstanding his being a little red faced and noisy, might have served; but perhaps, he was conscious of his own overflow of spirits, and judged one riotous person sufficient in a family; even then there was the Colonel; I wonder his fondness for his old profession did not lead him to make choice of you, who would have amused him with daily skirmishes—Had he known how admirably you work under ground, how you throw

B 3 open

open fortresses hitherto deemed inaccessible; regard to his own interest would have led him to offer you his hand, and I am not sure but it might have been accepted, if it were only from the circumstance of it being an odd one.—But a truce to raillery, for it ill suits with your present situation.

Sir Peter Blankley's injustice calls for every exertion on your part to defeat if possible his ungenerous designs:—you desire my advice, I would, I were capable of giving such as would prove beneficial, but I am entirely ignorant of the proper steps to pursue on such an alarming occasion; yet were I in your case, I would remonstrate with him on the baseness of his conduct, and if that availed nothing

nothing, which I fear would be the case, for the man who could thus dare to break through every tye of honour or generosity, will I am apprehensive dare to justify his having done so ; still I am of opinion it should be tried, and if it should prove unsuccessful, then you should appeal to the laws of your country for redress, it is a duty you owe yourself and your sister, it is a duty you owe to your father's manes, for if he has any knowledge of what passes here below (and who shall determine that he has not) will it not grieve his spirit to behold the children of his dearest hope, driven to beggary, while an alien basks in the sunshine of prosperity, and dissipates his well earned riches.

—While I recommend to my friend to

pursue those harsh measures with the unjust usurper of her fortune, let me guard her against involving her already humbled parent in misery and mortification.—Let her see you are determined to do yourself justice, but do not let her perceive that you look on her as the cause of your being driven to those extremities—Alas! the pale cheek of the silent unrebuking Sophia will be a punishment, more than adequate to her offence. — Be it your task, then my Harriet, by your soothing tenderness to blunt the stings that must hourly wound her conscience—You do not yet know the cordial, which, alleviating the distress of a fellow creature will convey to your own heart—I have lately felt its balmy influence in my attendance upon
the

the bed of sickness—How did my soul expand when I saw the languid eye turned upon me with a look of gratitude for some little act of attention, or when a faint pressure of the fevered hand dumbly but eloquently thanked me! Harriet, I was greatly overpaid for my little services—how much more cause will you have for self-approbation when you have healed the anguish of a mind, which has been occasioned by a too feeling sense of its own misconduct—I shall conclude my advice, by a line from your own favourite Shakespeare,

“ O step between her and her fighting soul.”

Write immediately and inform me of your success, for I will hope that success

B 4

may

may attend you in this, and every other
business of your life; to be a witness of
which will give real happiness to

Your

CAROLINE MORDAUNT.

MISS

MISS BEVILL

TO

MISS MORDAUNT.

I Have great news to tell you, but not one word of it shall you have until I come to its proper place; therefore have patience, for I must first thank you for the medley of your own composing, which you presented me with; it is really a very petty thing, and abounds with variety—Let me see, it began with a Te

B 5

Deum

Deum for the old lady's recovery; the next movement was *Al Spiritoso*, having for its theme the follies of friend, after containing this air a sufficient time, and displaying great abilities in the composition, you again change the key; and now the tones are grave and harmonious, the symphony is fine, but rather too much in the *Affettuoso*, then follows a rest: the whole concludes with an old tune, but so melodious that it amply recompensed me for some little harshness I could not help discovering in different parts of the piece, I confess, I think you have been quite successful in this your first attempt at sharps—Proceed my friend, I doubt not, I shall continue to furnish you with the thoughts for the recitative part; I cannot help regretting that little Sophia is not with you,
if

if she were, what a charming duet you might have, by taking some parts of your medley, particularly that

“ Oh step between her and her fighting soul.”

Is your patient fond of music? if she is take her in the place of Sophia—By the way I congratulate you on her recovery, as it renders your nocturnal accompaniments no longer necessary.

As by this time, I fancy you are grown impatient for the news I promised you, an account of our proceedings since my last—The settlements were I think then making—according to your advice I remonstrated against them, or indeed I believe I had done so a few times before I

B 6 received

received it, but all in vain—I talked to the winds—but now I consulted a man learned in the law, who after mature deliberation, gravely advised me “Not to kick against the pricks, as it could answer no good purpose, but might incense Sir Peter to deprive me of what he at present intended for my use.”—Alarmed at this idea, I followed my counsellor’s advice implicitly, for I began to know the value of money now that I was nearly destitute of it, and trembled for my thousand pounds, which I considered would enable me, when I advertised for the place of an humble companion, that is to say, an upper servant, to add, that wages would be no object, as I had a small annuity of my own—this I foresaw would entitle me to rather more indulgence, or more properly

perly speaking, somewhat less insult, than what commonly falls to the lot of those ill-fated dependants.—Having often heard patience spoken of as a virtue, I resolved to try if it was a pleasant one ; but on my word, if all the virtues are as disagreeable and difficult as I found this, I do not wonder that so few choose to have any thing to do with them—After all, I cannot help thinking those same virtues resemble medical applications, very good things, but so abominably unpalatable, that people refrain from meddling with them, until the necessity of the case will not admit of longer delay—Be this as it may, I continued in the practice of the one I had adopted, with a few variations, for four whole days, but had suffered such inexpressible torture, as convinced me
four

four more days would prove fatal to myself; and having always held the crime of suicide in just abhorrence, I determined to struggle against my nature no longer, when on the fifth day, while at dinner, we were surprized by a loud conversation in the anti-chamber—Sir Peter was about to express his indignation at such a mark of disrespect, when the following words, uttered in a shrill voice, reached our ears, “I tell you, Booby, I will announce myself”—a short scuffle ensued, when victory having declared in favour of the stranger, the door burst open, and in bounced Agatha, followed by a Swiss valet, trembling with rage at the rough treatment he had received, and the fear of the Baronet’s displeasure, at his having suffered any person to approach him,

him, who had not been formally introduced—Had a good painter been present, this scene would have secured him an immortal name—No words can ever do it justice—Agatha was in a light coloured broad cloth joseph, which having been several times in the hands of the scourer, was so shrunk as to make it very deficient in point of length, it not reaching within some inches of as long as her black quilted petticoat, the same defect was extended to the sleeves, leaving a large proportion of a coarse red arm exposed to view—On her head was a black bonnet, which was secured in its place by tying a white handkerchief over it, and making it fast under her chin—On her entrance she advanced to my mother, with an angry countenance:—So Patty, you see I have found you.

you out, though you had hid yourself in this horrid desert—you might well think indeed I should never, never follow you into such a den—no more should I, had it not been to save your poor children from ruin; for as to you, you might have gone to Old Nick, your own way, I should not have moved a finger to prevent you; but oh dear me! I forgot you are Lady Blankley—Ah, you have got a blank sure enough—I beg your Ladyship's pardon, (making a low curtsy) for not shewing proper respect to so great a personage."—By this time I had advanced with Sophia, to welcome her arrival, which the Baronet having noticed, addressed us, with a degree of impatience, saying, "You seem to have some knowledge of this poor woman; in the name
of

Edward Nelson

VILLEROY.

of Heaven, who is she?" I now took Agatha's hand, and advanced to him, with great formality, begged leave to introduce my aunt, Miss Agatha Mortimer.—He replied, with the utmost solemnity, that "He was sorry to find himself in any shape, connected with a person whose appearance and manners were so remarkably destitute of elegance and propriety."—Agatha seating herself, and surveying him from head to foot, with a look of insult, told him she had not come with any view of doing him either honour or pleasure, therefore she was glad that he did not like her—Here a servant entered, with a request from the post-boy, to know what he was to do with the lady's baggage.—"Tell him to bring it in" was her answer—"Where, Madam," asked Sir Peter—

Peter—"Why here, into this room, if you have no other," said the gentle virgin—"for to be plain with you, Mr. Knight, diabolical as this place is, I do not mean to budge one inch from it, until I have made you refund the fortune you have robbed those poor girls off, to purchase a husband for your fantastical minx—that done, I shall not stay in your frightful old jail one moment longer, but leave you in full possession of your lady—and my most earnest prayers and wishes are, that she may prove as bad a wife as she has a mother, and then you will be punished for all your sins."—My poor mother burst into tears, and left the room, Sophia followed, giving me a look of half rebuke, and half entreaty as she shut the door—the rebuke I knew was occasioned by my being the cause of this unwelcome

welcome visit, and the entreaty was, to use my influence with her to spare her sister.

I accordingly proposed to the virgin to retire with me, and repair her dress, to which with some reluctance she consented, as she said it looked as if she had felt what that thing had remarked on her appearance—I made use of this opportunity, and prevailed on her by threatening, flattery and remonstrance, to promise to distress Lady Blankley as little as possible.

After humanizing her figure a little, we went down to the drawing room, where we found Lord Enfield, with the Countess, and her sister.—Sir Peter, whom nothing can make remiss in one point of etiquette, presented

presented Agatha to the strangers, with great politeness, which softened her so much as to make her tolerably good humoured the rest of the evening: but this did not last for the next morning at breakfast, she abruptly asked my mother where her husband's picture was, adding, that she saw every place stuffed with portraits, but could not find his: the Baronet, misconceiving her, said it hung in her Lady's dressing room, the proper place in his judgment, for a husband's; but if that were not the case, still he believed it would have been there, as he did not think himself entitled to a place among those illustrious characters while living.—Agatha's countenance, which at the beginning of this speech had wore a smile of approbation, (she too being mistaken) now

now changed to a look of fury, which soon vented itself in these words, "What! do you suppose I have been enquiring after your likeness?—Heavens keep me; for what should I wish to see the duplicate of any thing I hate so much?—No, no, Mr. Knight, I have no desire to behold either you or your picture, unless indeed you were in a state to entitle you to a place among those illustrious characters you talk so much off—I should then contemplate either the copy or original with infinite satisfaction."—The Baronet only smiled contemptuously.

Agatha again attacked her sister—

"Well, Patty, I suppose since this creature is in your dressing room, your dear husband is in your bed room, the distinction

tion is very proper, but come with me, I want to look at his blessed countenance, his is the face of a man, he is not like those great baboons in their large wigs, who look as if they despised their betters; and she arose, desiring Lady Blankley to lead the way, who, with great confusion confessed that Mr. Bevil's picture was not hung up, but put by in an upper room. —The virgin's rage would not suffer her to speak for a moment—at length she broke out with, "Oh, you crocodile, so you have put my dear brother in a garret, but I will have him down, he shall hang in this very room, that he may keep you for ever in mind of your baseness, you wicked woman!" She was hurrying to the door, but as I was fearful she might find the garret, which indeed did hide the

the representative of my honoured father, and shock his already affrighted wife with it, I stepped between her, but she persisting, I pointed out the impossibility of her putting her design into execution, as there was not an inch of space left on any part of the wall unoccupied, and asked her where she would place it—"Where," said she; "Why I would take down that harper or mountebank with his fool's cap and his harp."—A blush now covered my face, for the ignorance of my poor aunt, who had mistaken a wreath of laurel for a fool's cap, and a quadrant for a harp; for Oh, what a fall to dignity! this harper or mountebank was no less a person than the identical admiral who died to save his country. The baronet's wrath at the degradation of his heroic relation

was

was done away by the triumph her excessive ignorance had given him over her— He first looked at her with affected compassion, then turning to Sabina, with the appearance of displeasure, he told her, he was prodigiously hurt to see her smile at those defects which arose from nature, having dispensed her favours with a negligently hand, particularly as the smallness of her gifts had in the present instance been rendered more conspicuous, by the powerful aid of education having been entirely withheld: that from her to whom every power had been bountiful, much was to be expected; and the ridicule of the world would hastily follow the most trifling error she would commit, but fortunately it was less severe, as the object was of less consequence, and where humble

ble birth and humble manners conspired with a total want of education, every thing was to be overlooked, even the mistaking a hero crowned with laurel for a mountebank, and a quadrant (the type of his profession) for a musical instrument. From those who had nothing, nothing could be expected, and for his part, however others might laugh at and despise such unfortunates, they would ever be entitled to his pity—Poor Agatha, never did I see her so humbled—not one word had she to say—compassion for her speechless situation, and a little forenerness for the reflection on her birth having grazed me as it passed, made me take up the cudgels—I said, I could not conceive how my aunt had merited his pity, as I could not suppose that her calling a wreath of laurels

a foolscap had excited it, for I was very sure all impartial people would allow, that it made the wearer look like an arrant simpleton: and most, I fancied would join in opinion with her and me, that the inside of that head must be lined with much folly, which could submit to have its outside dressed with such foppery, and the not knowing what a quadrant was, must be imputed to her ignorance of the instruments used in navigation; which was nothing wonderful, as it was not a part of a female's education.—Here Sir Peter interrupted me with, and likewise of the fine arts, which I believe are part of most female's education; of which I presume music is one; the harp is a musical instrument and not of a late invention—but I have done, and beg pardon if

if I have given offence, by presenting your relation, fait a près nature. He left the room with the air of a conqueror—I was now almost as much as discomposed as Agatha, she vented her spleen on her sister, and I withdrew, with intention of letting mine evaporate, while I gave you an account of what had occasioned it:—but I was prevented as I was passing by Sabina's apartment, by her calling to me to assist her in the choice of some jewels; I replied peevishly, that she must excuse me, for since I had been deprived of the power to wear jewels, I had given up all judgment in them—she laughed, and said it was astonishing how much people of my rank thought of fortune, that for her part she despised it, and thought of a way to make all parties happy of which

a few hours would convince me.—She would then hope I should be as kind to her as I was before this foolish affair, and that we would fend that foolish woman, Miss Mortimer, back to France, or prevail on her to speak and look more good naturedly; moreover, without my enquiring what her plan was, she informed me, that she had written to her lover, acquainting him with her determination to relinquish all claim to the fortune her father intended her—that she had not a doubt of his ready concurrence with her in this intention, as it would give him an opportunity of convincing the world that her name and person had been the only objects of his wishes.—Romantic as I knew her to be, as I could not suppose but that she meant this as mockery

mockery—vexed with the idea, I told her, if she had really sent the letter she spoke of, a few hours would convince her of how little value her name and person were, and the high birth she spoke of, into the bargain, as the man she flattered her lover, would refuse that hand she offered, unattended by that wealth her unjust father had defrauded myself and sister of, to procure her an establishment in life. Sensible that it was Lord Enfield's only inducement in seeking the alliance, as well as his sons in accepting of it—She smiling, answered, how art thou deceived! I tell you, people of our rank scorn to bestow a thought on such mechanical business, as the quantity of gold each other may be possessed of, but perceiving that I was going, she held out

both her hands to me, saying, you leave me in displeasure—let us be friends—I have a secret to disclose, but you must keep it.—I told her that her secret would be safest in her own bosom, and that I wished not to be troubled with it;—so saying, I flounced out of the room. The following morning was appointed for signing the settlements, which Sir Peter had deferred till then, on account of the intended bridegroom's changing his name, which was now finally adjusted.—As soon as the parties had met, Sophia, myself headed by Agatha, broke in upon their privacy and formally protested against their proceedings. A violent altercation ensued between the enraged virgin and Lord Enfield, but to which I could not attend, a letter having been brought me
which

which engrossed all my faculties. Agatha finding herself no match for the exquisite ridicule and pointed wit of her antagonist, gave up the cause, and retiring to the corner of the room, indulged herself in a good fit of crying—Her silence gave them an opportunity to return to business—but as they were going to put their signatures to the parchment, I stepping forward requested a moment's pause, as I fancied the letter held in my hand might cause some alteration in their present determination. I then presented the paper to Sir Peter, who had not gone half through its contents when it dropped from his hands and he stood fixed like a statue. Finding him unable to proceed, I took up the letter, and read aloud as follows:

“Unkind

C 4

“ Unkind Harriet! the secret you refused to listen to yesterday, you must not refuse to read this day. An hour has not passed since I rewarded the most faithful of lovers with my hand at the altar.— This will remove the doubts you ungenerously entertained of your Sabina’s friendship, and restore her to your good opinion and affection. The nobleman to whom my father would have united me, never had my approbation: yet such was my sense of duty to my honoured parent, that I would have sacrificed the feelings of my heart to his happiness, had he not sought to make me false to my friend, by unjustly depriving her of a fortune to which I could have no possible claim.— Had the son of Lord Enfield accepted of my offered person on the terms I proposed, I had

I had been his; but he rejected me with scorn, with ridicule;—yes Harriet, the daughter of Sir Peter Blankley was refused, unless she brought with her large sums of gold to repay her lover for his condescension in honouring her with the title of his wife. How my father will bear this, I know not; but you may assure him the resentment I feel at the insult, is such as becomes his daughter.—The youth I have blest is not entirely unknown to you—how will you be surprized, to learn that it is the orphan Charles, whom Sir Peter's humanity rescued from partaking the fate of his unfortunate parents. I shall leave to my Harriet the task of breaking to the best of fathers the step I have taken, which I fear will greatly offend him; but as it is my first error, (and you may assure

assure him, that it shall be the study of my future life to obey and please him.) I shall hope for his forgiveness, and that he will honour my adored Charles with the name of Blankley, a name which the man on whom he has conferred it has proved himself so unworthy of.—A line, containing my father's commands shall throw me with the master of my heart at his feet.—Angels protect my friend, and make he happy as her

SABINA."

The silence into which I had thrown my auditors, was interrupted by Agatha's running up to Sir Peter—(Those advanced maidens have no humanity, Caroline) clapping her hands and setting up a loud laugh—This roused him from the state
of

of superstition he was in; he called to me in a broken voice to relieve him from that woman—but the relentless virgin, not content with what she had done, mimicking the Baronet on a late occasion, said,—“from you, to whom every power has been bountiful, much is to be expected, and the ridicule of the world would justly follow the most trifling error you could commit.” This was more than the disappointed father could support, for he fell back senseless in his chair. Shocked at the unfeeling brutality of my aunt, I gave her a look of indignation, which put a stop to her loquacity, and sent her grumbling to her seat; while Sophia assisted me in recovering Sir Peter, which was scarcely effected, when the Peer addressing his companions, proposed to withdraw,

withdraw, as their attendance could be no longer necessary, unless indeed Miss Bevil would condescend to accept the hand which had been intended for Miss Blankley. He was proceeding to shew how effectually this would prevent the imprudence of that lady from becoming public, but I begged him to save himself any further trouble on that head, as I too much despised the selfish ungenerous conduct of the father, to form any connection with the son. Resolved, if possible, not to lose the fortune he had taken so much pains to gain, he addressed Sophia to the same purpose; who assured him, that she was entirely of her sister's opinion. This gave Agatha fresh courage, and advancing to the discountenanced nobleman, said, she supposed her turn was next, as he and
his

his monkey were refused and despised by all the rest of the family, they would be glad to have her. The Earl bowing very low, thanked her, but desired to decline her proffered person, as neither he or his son were ambitious of suffering purgatory in this world; therefore they would not prevent her, whom Nature had so eminently formed for the office, from leading asses in the next: so making a careless bow, he was leaving the room, his companions following, when Agatha called out to the late intended bridegroom,—

“Mr. Blankley, sure you are not such a monster as to leave your papa in distress? but oh dear, I forgot, he is not your papa, he is only your name-sake. The thought was a happy one, and gained her a complete victory, neither father or son at-tempting

tempting a reply. I fancy you must now be anxious for some account of the youth, on whom the generous noble-minded, but romantic Sabina has bestowed herself. He is the son of a young clergyman, who was domestic chaplain to Sir Peter, and married the waiting woman of the former Lady Blankley. The mother lived not to see her child, as the moment which gave him birth deprived her of life. Her husband survived but two years, and with his latest breath, bequeathed the orphan to the care of her ladyship, who, faithful to her trust, watched over the helpless infant with a parent's tenderness, making no distinction between it and Sabina, who was born a few months after the death of its father.—Thus until the age of fourteen he enjoyed every blessing
the

the most perfect affection could bestow, when it pleased Heaven to deprive him of his benefactress, who died suddenly, but not without intreating Sir Peter's protection to her adopted Charles.—The Baronet's humanity here shone conspicuous, for no sooner was his excellent lady intreated, than he dismissed the tutor, under whose instruction she had placed her charge, and gave the youth in care to his steward, to whom he has acted as clerk ever since. Sir Peter's intentions were, that he should succeed to the office of steward at the decease of the present, who is an old man.—Poor Charles! I fear even that would have been a preferable lot to that which now awaits you; for this hard-hearted parent will hear of nothing in their favour.—I have urged every thing

thing that I could, but to no purpose.—His valet has written by his command, to Sabina, to inform her, that she has no longer a parent.—I remonstrated against the indignity he was offering his child.—He calmly asked me, who was to proper to correspond with the wife of a menial as one of her husband's fellow servants.—My heart is much afflicted at the idea of what these unfortunates will suffer from the unrelenting obduracy of this unfeeling man, who seems determined to abandon them to the melancholy fate, that in all probability will be their portion, destitute as they are of the means to live, and the power to procure those means.—Were Sir Peter like other men, I should look forward to the cooling of his passion as the end of their distress; but he has never
been

been in a passion, not even a hasty word has been heard to escape him on the occasion, his resolution seems to arise from a determined malice.—I have written to Sabina, but have hardly ventured to hold out a hope to her; I have likewise wrote to the partner of her flight, inclosing him a fifty pound note, as I fear their stock of money is but small.—I would most gladly have increased the sum, but it was the whole of my wealth. The events which have taken place in this family have almost made me turn moralizer, for I cannot but reflect on the vicissitudes of this life. Yesterday I dreaded the loss of fortune as the greatest evil which could befall me—to day that fear is removed, and I find myself restored to at least the probable possession of a large one—yet I
am

am far from happy. This moment I would cheerfully resign one half of what-ever I shall call mine, to recall this noble-minded girl to her lost situation.

Adieu, my Caroline, I am too much tired with writing to add more than that

I am

Yours

HARRIET BEVIL.

MISS

MISS MORDAUNT

TO

MISS BEVIL.

THE ways of Providence are dark and intricate: How then shall I, a weak erring mortal, presume to question them, or murmur at its decrees, though they have plunged me into inevitable ruin. Oh! my Harriet, I have this day made a discovery fatal to my peace; one moment has deprived me of all the hope
my

my heart had begun to indulge, of passing my days in tranquility and comfort. But I will proceed to relate what has totally blighted my promised happiness:—My generous patroness, alas ! (I blush at the name) having been directed by her physicians to remove from town with all expedition, requested me to remain a few days behind her, to receive a visitor, whom she expected from abroad—ever delighted to oblige her, I readily complied, and as soon as I had seen her depart, I began to employ myself in transacting some little business, that her sudden departure had compelled her to leave to my care. Amongst the rest, I was directed to remove some papers, which were deposited in a part of the house, which had not been lately occupied. On repairing

repairing to the apartment where they were lodged, I found they were placed in a drawer beyond my reach; which obliged me to stand on a chair to enable me to accomplish my design.—The chair slipping from under my feet, I fell, and in my fall caught hold of a curtain, which I instantly drew aside, and exposed to my view a full-length portrait of my departed mother.—I uttered a loud cry and fell senseless on the floor, where I remained, until a servant, alarmed by the noise of the fall and the cry that followed, came to my assistance.—Returning life brought redoubled horror—I started from the seat where she had placed me, and seizing her arm, darted forward to the picture, enquiring, with a face and voice of distraction, to whom it belonged.

—The

—The poor girl, affrighted, broke from my hold and disappeared; but soon returned with my woman.—Her terror had awakened me from mine; and the short space I had for recollection, served to shew me that I was on the brink of destruction, from which nothing but the most guarded conduct could save me.—Hearing the hasty steps of people approaching the room, I threw myself into a chair, and resting my head on my hand, continued to meditate on my distressful situation. So entirely was I engrossed by my own thoughts, that the entrance of the women was unnoticed by me; they even spoke to me several times without my being collected enough to return any answer. The housekeeper who had accompanied them observed, that I must be certainly

certainly stunned by the fall ; that it was evident, by the manner in which I kept my hand to my head, that it was hurt, and was the occasion of the madness the girl had spoken of ; she concluded, by saying, a physician must be immediately sent for, and left the room for that purpose. I felt a sensation of pleasure on hearing this remark, arising from two causes.—The first at that moment was, that it gave me a respite from speaking, to which I felt the greatest repugnance—The second was, that by this means my secret was still confined to my own bosom, which would at least give me time to reflect on what was best to be done. The doctor at length arrived, and ordered me to be put to bed and kept quiet ; which he thought would soon restore me, as
what

what I suffered, was owing, as my attendants had imagined, to my being stunned by the fall. His directions were abused, and I was left at liberty to reflect; but ignorant as I was of every particular that related to the picture I had discovered,—it was impossible for me to determine upon any thing. I then searched for an expedient, by which I might gain the knowledge I so much desired; when recollecting that the housekeeper I have before mentioned, had been brought up in the family of Lady Belvidere, I concluded she was qualified to give me the wished-for information. Eager to try, I told my woman, that I found myself much better, but not well enough to write a letter, which must be written immediately, therefore she must undertake it, and in
the

the mean time I would request the house-keeper to take her place by my bed side ; which the good old woman, rejoiced to find me so much recovered, willingly complied with. After a short time passed in relating the manner of my accident, I said I had some recollection that I had seen a picture, and asked, if it was any friend of Lady Belvedere—I trembled when I asked the question, and though anxious to know, yet I dreaded her answer—She shook her head, and replied that it was not a friend of her Lady's—I felt a momentary transport of joy, but it was indeed momentary, and served but to render the pangs which followed more terrible—She proceeded : “ No, madam, the original of that picture was the greatest foe my honoured mistress ever had—

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That

That woman, all angel as she appears, has by her baseness brought ruin and infamy on both the noble families to whom she is allied. That woman, madam, was the celebrated Lady Frances Henly; his Lordship, her husband, is brother to my Lady, and is now wandering through the world an exiled outlaw, for having killed the villain who dishonoured her. This is the cause of that melancholy in which you so often see her Ladyship plunged."—Now Harriet, have I not cause for misery? yes indeed my friend I have cause; and happiness will never more be my lot—I have spent some hours in such reflections as a mind torn by unfeeling passions is capable of; but nothing has as yet presented itself that offers any possibility of being followed with

with effect—My first resolve was to throw myself at the feet of my injured benefactors, and confess myself an hypocrite and impostor; but the recollection that the honoured protector of my youth must be involved in my destruction, made me abandon the idea with horror—I next determined to inform this venerable friend of the discovery I had made, and of every circumstance I knew respecting my unhappy birth; conjuring him to recall me to his humble, peaceful dwelling, where I would watch over the evening of his days with that gratitude and affection of which I found my heart full.—Charmed with this thought, I arose and flew to put it into execution—At that instant my vow rushed upon my mind, and almost tempted me in the anguish of my soul to curse the

the rashness which had dictated it—But in my cooler moments, I rejoice to have made it impossible to violate the confidence reposed in me by the hapless Lady Frances—What have I said? is my silence then owing to my vow alone? Degenerate Caroline! and would the solemn request of a dying parent have been disregarded? oh! no, my Harriet think not so meanly of me. I feel that within me which would enable me to embrace poverty, and the frowns and contempt of the world, sooner than injure the memory of that beloved sufferer in the opinion of the man by whom she desired so ardently to be esteemed—Obliged to relinquish this my favourite scheme, and wearied with a fruitless search after one more propitious,

I gave

I gave it up and sought to lessen my distress by communicating it to my friend, and requesting her advice, unbiassed by her regard for me—all I ask is such counsel as she herself would follow, if reduced to the choice of miseries which are alone left to the option of

Your unhappy

CAROLINE MORDAUNT.

VILLEROY?

MISS BEVIL

MISS MORDAUNT.

I HAVE scarcely recovered the shock I received, from the awful discovery which my Caroline has made: and I still shudder at the idea of what that moment pierced a heart ill qualified to indure such rude attacks; yet, why do I say ill qualified? no, I revoke the sentence. It is from great minds alone that great

great efforts are to be expected—The little soul will sink under misfortune, while the exalted spirit will rise superior to calamity—And shall I then fear for my friend, that friend who possesses a mind not to be subdued by any of the various trials which unavoidably wait on humanity—Well, does my Caroline observe, that the ways of Providence are dark and intricate—may she not from thence draw comfort to her heart? would it be presumption to believe, that the situation in which she is placed, and which now fills her with horror, may have been ordered by the Wise Dispenser of good and evil, as a recompence for the penitence of her broken hearted parent, and to alleviate the sufferings of those, whom that parent's crime had rendered unhappy—Are you

not at this time a comfort and consolation to the afflicted sister of the injured Lord Henry—which will be the better atonement for the wretchedness of which you have hitherto been the cause, the wounding her heart afresh by the recollection of past sorrows, and depriving her of a beloved companion, in whose society she forgets events that have been destructive of her peace, or, letting her remain in ignorance of that which known, can be productive of no good? Consult your own heart, it will instruct you how to act, it will tell you that in compassion, nay, even in justice to Lady Belvidere, the discovery you have made ought to make no alteration in regard to you ; should it be otherwise, you are no longer innocent—You are from that moment responsible for every

every pang your misquieted conduct will occasion to the bosom of one, it was your duty to have made happy, by sacrificing to her quiet, feelings, which on a strict examination will be found to originate in pride.—These, Caroline, are my sentiments, not given in haste, but after due deliberation—I have placed myself in your situation, and find it impossible I should ever adopt any other—I could write a volume on this subject; but my wishes to offer you my opinion (which by following, you will, I trust, convince me you approve) will not let me detain it any longer than first to request that you will inform me as early as you can of its coinciding with your own ideas—would you also tell me, your mind was reconciled to your present fate, after this strange

D 5

event,

event, and that you feel returning happiness, I think I should hereafter worship you as a being of a superior nature.

HARRIET BEVIL.

MISS

VILLEROY

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MISS MORDAUNT

TO

MISS BEVIL.

BUT a few hours have elapsed since I was restored to the society of Lady Belvidere—This will sufficiently inform you of my having followed your advice, rather let me say your wishes, wishes which arose from affection, and dictated such advice as you thought best calculated to insure me worldly happiness.—I

D 6 should

should be unworthy of the anxious solicitude you discover, did I not by every means in my power, endeavour to reward your kindness, which I can only do by returning to that tranquillity I lately enjoyed—rest assured, my dear girl, no effort of mine shall be wanting to obtain so desirable an end—Nature has not formed me with a gloomy disposition, nor do I court misfortune; yet I will confess to you that the evils which attended my birth, were of such consequence, and the hand of Fate seems to have so visibly interposed, in giving me to the charity of those who are bound to execrate the hour that gave me life, that my spirit appears ready to sink under the calamities I must hereafter encounter; and I would joyfully renounce my present (in the eye of
the

the world) enviable situation, for one in the humblest walk of life, where I might be blessed with that peace of mind which I cannot have in my present state, while every look of approbation, or expression of tenderness, fills me with guilty confusion— Ah! my friend, how did I tremble as I approached the residence of Lord Henry's sister, and how did I blush to behold that sister coming with open arms to embrace the offspring of the devoted Lady Frances—A thousand ideas rushed on my mind at once; I was near fainting—She pressed me to her bosom, saying, my love is not well; why was not I informed of this? Yes madam I am well, only a little hurried, I shall recover immediately— But your looks are altered, Caroline, you are not the same I left you.

Her

—Her words were barbed arrows to my heart ; I wonder what power withheld my confessing, that I was not indeed the same—A flood of tears came most opportunely to my assistance, or I must have suffocated, for I felt a pressure at my breast that would not suffer me to breathe—She had led me to her dressing room, soothing and caressing me with the tenderness of a parent—My woman related the accident I had met with, and that accounted for my present illness, as she added that I had not been well since.—The anxiety of my patroness only increased my confusion ; I requested therefore to be left alone, feigning a desire to repose a little, after my journey—My wish was approved of, and I have spent that time in recounting those circumstances to you —I would

—I would that I could gratify my Harriet by adding, that I am reconciled to my situation, after the discovery I have made—but it will not be ; there is a meanness in my living on the bounty of one, who, I am well aware would spurn me from her with hatred and contempt, did I not, by concealing myself under the mask of duplicity, keep her in ignorance how unworthy I am of her protection—this is the present state of my mind, what alteration time may make I will not presume to determine ; one thing alone I can decide on, which is, that time, while it leaves me the power of thinking, can never obliterate the friendship and affection of Harriet Bevil from the bosom of her

Grateful

CAROLINE MORDAUNT.

MISS

MISS MORDAUNT

TO

MISS BEVIL.

MY dear Harriet will believe me when I assure her that I have looked most anxiously for this hour to arrive when I can uninterrupted renew my intercourse with her, that charming intercourse, without which, I feel I should not be happy, though surrounded with what the world deems every ingredient to constitute

constitute perfect felicity.—I have been now three weeks at this seat of enchantment, which nature and art have combined to render the most beautiful spot I have ever beheld, such woods and such lawns! how often have I surprized myself breathing an involuntary wish, that instead of the crowd of flutterers with which I am encircled, Harriet Bevil were my only companion—and cannot this wish be realized? The kind, the generous Lady Belvidere says it can, and desires me to tell you so, and that she requests that you will gratify her and the friend of your youth with an early visit—need I say more? I will hope I need not—Come, then, thou dearest partner of my heart, let us together enjoy the rural beauties of this earthly paradise—Nor shall the vul-

garity

garity of early rising, prevent us seeing the glorious sun begin its course; nor frightened by the dread of spoiling our complexions, shall we hide ourselves from its noon-day beams; but we will climb the neighbouring hills, undismayed by the astonishment of the sons and daughters of fashion, at our rustic strength—we will be even bold enough to prefer a walk by moon light, and the song of the love-tuned nightingale, to a promenade blazing with variegated lamps, and a concert of more studied, but less harmonious music—we will brave the dews of the evening, nor run terrified by the rustling of the leaves.—Hasten then to let me view a female unspoiled by affectation, for I have lately beheld Nature's most beautiful works so disguised by art, that I am grown out of humour

humour with my sex.—How have I fretted to see a lovely blooming creature, who might have sat for the picture of Hebe, and who would dance a whole night^s, without once complaining of fatigue, throw herself on a sofa after a walk of twenty yards, calling for drops and protesting she would instantly expire; while the silly coxcombs surrounded her with pitious faces, chiding her imprudence, and conjuring her to be more guarded in future, and consider the extreme delicacy of her frame, which was unequal to such violent exercise. Such is the society to which your Caroline has been sacrificed for these last three weeks, engrossing every minute of that time I could have employed to so much better purpose, in attending on my patroness, and laying open every

every thought of my heart to my beloved Harriet—Yet I do not regret the hours I have lost, as my attendance rendered that of Lady Belvidere unnecessary, and which the weak state of her health would not have allowed her to pay, I am sorry to add, her present melancholy state of mind—Ah! Harriet, were I inclined to forget the misfortunes of my birth, the sorrows of the exiled Lord Henly's sister would too frequently remind me of them—Yet I thank Heaven, she has sometimes intervals of happiness, when the cloud disappears from her brow, and the smile of cheerfulness gives a grace to her unlimited and splendid hospitality—Your Caroline smiles too; but it is only when she looses the remembrance of herself, which the busy scenes she has been engaged in, have sometimes

times assisted her in doing.—They are, however, at an end for the present, our gay visitants having taken their departure, all except a gentleman of the name of Faulkland, who remains a few days longer. I do wrong to rank him among the set of unthinking beings that have left us, for he is of a very superior cast—I wish you knew him, all your indifference would vanish, and you would pronounce him il *Apollo del'Englilterra*. He is certainly the most elegant man I have ever seen; yet his person is his least recommendation: he possesses a fine understanding, is wonderfully accomplished, and has such an engaging disposition and manners, that all who are of his acquaintance must regard him with partiality.—He is a great proficient in music, and sings divinely, he condescends

condescends to accompany me, and I never sing or play so well as at those times—I fear we shall be dull when he leaves us, for Lady Belvidere is delighted with him: but yonder I see him from my window, he is walking alone, I must go down; for her Ladyship I recollect cannot attend him, and it would look uncivil to leave him to himself—So adieu my ever dear Harriet, let your next inform me of the day I may expect to embrace you, let it tell me also how the noble-minded Sabina is situated. — If her father remains obstinate, the enclosed will be of some little assistance towards relieving her present necessities—you owe her much, and I likewise shall be much indebted to her for the opportunity of applying some part of the

the

WILLEROY.

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the bounty of my liberal benefactress, in a manner so suitable to my inclination—once more adieu !

Yours, ever,

C. MORDAUNT.

HON.

HON. HENRY FAULKLAND

to

CHARLES BEVIL, ESQ.

I FANCY Charles you conclude I have followed the hounds into some unknown region, or, that a five bar gate, by breaking my neck, has put an end to my pursuing them at all.—If you have written my Epitaph, you must not destroy it, for though at present I am among the quick, yet one week's more confinement

ment in this place would number me with the dead: after this I scarcely need say that I am at my father's—indeed my writing to you would have informed you of that, for had I remained till the end of time in the heaven-born society which has detained me for the last six weeks, I question if I should have stolen a moment to tell you where I was: but the case is greatly altered, I have now plenty of leisure hours, so you may command me, for I assure you I have nothing more agreeable to occupy them—yet the old gentleman has taken great pains to please me, on my alighting he met me at the door with, you are welcome, Harry, but I fear you will find it dull; my house is empty, no company at all—I answered that I was glad of it, that I did not feel disposed

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for

for company.—He led the way to an apartment, when, on entering, I found that bore old Lord Bentnich, and what at this time was still a greater bore to me, his daughter, Lady Ann, few things could just now derange me more—I paid my compliments awkwardly enough, saying, I was very much disappointed at finding such good company, as the Earl had assured me he was alone.—My father aiming at an arch look, said, he dared to say that I was extremely vexed at finding such an obstruction to the happiness I had promised myself, in a *tete à tete* with my old father, particularly as Lady Ann was of the party.—Here we were summoned to dinner.—After conducting her Ladyship, and seating her beside the Earl, I placed myself at the
foot

foot of the table, telling him I would assist him in doing the honours of the house.—He nodded, and winked at me to take the seat next the Lady, but I did not chuse to understand him.—The cloth was scarcely removed before he desired me to conduct her Ladyship to the drawing room, adding, with a grin, you must find some method to entertain her, as Lord Bentnich and I have business.—I replied that I was ready to attend Lady Ann whenever she pleased, but that I thought his Lordship was in a great hurry to drive her from his company.—She coloured, and rising, said, it was her wish to withdraw, but by no means her desire to take me from what was more agreeable to me.—I tried to say something civil, and presenting my hand led her up stairs, cursing my stars.

every step for having thrown me into such a situation. Now, Charles, I suppose you are racking your brain to know what all this means—I think I hear you say. is the devil in the fellow, or is he mad?—why, I thought he preferred Lady Ann to all other women, and that he had given his father permission to ask her in marriage for him, to which all parties having consented, they were shortly to be united—all very true, except the last, and that can never be, no Charles, never, never—and now to account for all this :—I saw Lady Ann Bentnich, a handsome lively good humoured girl, she was attentive to me, and as most other young fellows would have been, I was pleased with her—my father liked her fortune, and her father liked my connections, as he thought
they

they would strengthen his political interests ; so they agreed upon the match, and then asked our consents. — I told my father he might dispose of me as he thought proper, and the Lady was equally dutiful. We were then brought together. and left alone, when I, knowing it would be expected I should say something, talked of everlasting love, to which she replied, in the same ridiculous stile, I have already repented, and am determined to forget my part of the engagement, and I sincerely hope her good sense and spirit will make her do the same.

To divert myself while the old folks settled money matters, I paid a visit in the neighbourhood of Belvidere Hall, a seat belonging to the widow of the late Lord

D 3 of

of that name; when chance throwing me into her company, she invited me to her house—I accepted her invitation, for she had that with her, that made it impossible to refuse. Here you will say, a woman; but you are mistaken, it was an angel, a divinity, such a creature as you never saw or ever can, unless your propitious stars should give her to your view.—Nature has not formed such another, it gave her to the world to shew the utmost it was capable of, and all who contemplate the noble effort must cry, Wonderful are its works!—l'ish! you exclaim, every love-sick booby thinks the same of his mistress.—I would to Heaven you could see her, Charles, for you would then excuse my madness; for such I know you will term it, when I tell you
that

that she is the daughter of a very distant relation of Lady Belvidere, who dying, left her destitute of all worldly provision, and she is now a dependant on her Ladyship's bounty—Oh ! Charles, how it will gratify my soul to raise her to the rank which she was born to dignify—for I have pledged my faith so to do, and have received hers in return, never to be another's.—How that rapturous moment dwells on my fancy ; it cheers and supports me even in the presence of Lady Ann, and that is the place where most I stand in need of support ; for I would not have you suppose me so lost to all sense of honour, as to imagine that I have no qualms of conscience on her account, the reverse being the case, so much so, that were I master of the universe, I could at

this moment resign it, to be assured that she detested me.—But my curse is, she loves me! yes in spight of my visible indifference, (to give it no worse a name) she doats upon me.—Is not this wonderful that she can love what she must despise: but to prove that to be the case I will give you some account of our proceedings during the week I have been here; for this end, return with me to the drawing room, where, after placing my charge on the sofa, I seated myself at the other extreme, where I sat playing with my frille, and looking like a very silly fellow.— This went on some time; at length Lady Ann said, my Henry is displeased at finding me in his father's house; I now see the impropriety of my being here, but my impatience to see him did not allow
me

me to reflect on the indelicacy of the step I was taking.—Her words and the manner which accompanied them, affected me ; I drew near, and taking her hand, I protested that it delighted me to find her with my father, and that I did not conceive it possible she could err in any thing—I ran on in this way, till the emotion she had raised subsided, and conscience took its place.—Ashamed of the falsehoods I had uttered, I resolved to add no more to them, so quitting her Ladyship rather abruptly, I placed myself at the window, where the first object that caught my attention was a weeping willow—it brought to my mind a favourite walk of my adored Caroline—I was instantly at Belvidere, and forgot there existed such a being as Lady Ann, until a

tap on my shoulder, and a voice, asking, What is my Henry thinking so intently on? roused me, when, like a person awaking from a dream, I inquired, are you fond of weeping willows, Lady Ann? — She either said yes, or no, I can't tell which; but I continued, if you are, you should go to Belvidere Hall, there are the finest I have ever seen, I passed half my time in the walk where they are placed — When? said her Ladyship, I did not know you were ever there — I unthinkingly rejoined that I had passed the last six weeks in that delightful paradise of sweets — I then, ridiculous coxcomb that I was, gave her a laboured description of the willow walk: God knows how long I should have continued it, had she not interrupted me by saying, that she had
heard

heard much of a young lady who was related to the mistress of the mansion.—I had been thinking too much of the lovely inhabitant of Belvidere, to hear her spoken of with calmness—Entirely off my guard, I eagerly exclaimed, Miss Mordaunt ! she is indeed the most charming of her sex—Indeed, Faulkland I believe you think her so, but you might have spared me this sudden communication of your thoughts.—I no sooner saw my error, than I attempted to amend it, by excusing what I had uttered, and most wretchedly did I succeed ; for after two or three attempts to speak, I brought out, that I, for my part, could not say I thought her so very beautiful—to be sure the world called her extremely handsome—She certainly was a fine woman, but as to beauty I did

E 6 not

not know what to say to that, for that, according to my judgement, she had her faults. The lie stuck in my throat, and prevented my finishing my elegant harangue, which you must allow to be very descriptive in many parts—after a little time I ventured to lift my eye to Lady Ann—hers were fixed upon my face—a tear which stood in one of them, rolled down her cheek—I took her hand, and putting it to my lips, told her, that had I never had the happiness of seeing her, I might have thought Miss Mordaunt handsome—She withdrew her hand, and giving me a look of the utmost contempt, left the room, but hastily returned, on hearing the old people on the stairs.—My father had no sooner entered the parlour, than he began to shew his wit, by saying,

saying, that he supposed we had been very impatient for their company. as we must have been at a loss for conversation—Lady Ann replied, no indeed, Mr. Faulkland had been very agreeable, and entertained her with a very interesting description of Lady Belvidere's weeping willows.—The Earl remarked that it was a drooping subject, and rather an odd one, he conceived, for a lover to entertain his mistress with, as neither weeping or willow were reckoned very propitious to love. This foolish remark sunk the already depressed spirits of Lady Ann; I did not pity her as she brought it on herself by her wish to make me look simple. Lord Bentnich, finding no person willing to talk politics, desired his daughter to give him a little music—She repaired to
the

the harpichord—I offered to accompany her, and said I had a song which I thought would please her—we sang it several times, and she commended it highly, and asked if it was not of my own composing—I said no, it was the work of superiour abilities, Miss Mordaunt having composed the music, and the immortal Perrarch the words—That the only merit I could claim, was from my joining two such harmonious compositions together—she now read the lines attentively as follows :

When love, fond love, commands the strain,

The coyest muse must furs obey :

Love bids my wounded breast complain,

And whispers the melodious lay :

Yet when such griefs restrain the muses wing,

How shall she dare to soar, or how attempt to sing.

Oh !

Oh! could my heart express its woe,

How poor, how wretched should I seem;

But as the plaintive accents flow,

Soft comfort spreads its golden gleam,

And each gay scene that nature holds to view,

Bids Laura's absent charms to memory bloom
anew.

But soft my song, not thine the power

To paint the never-dying flame

Which gilds through life the gloomy hour,

Which nurtures this love-wasted frame:

For since with Laura dwells my wander'd heart,

Cheer'd by that soft'ning flame, I brave Death's
eben dart.

Then shutting the book, pronounced the
words, wandered heart! with a deep sigh,
and left the instrument—Since which
time a settled melancholy has taken pos-
session of her late gay features. For the
last

last two days, she has endeavoured to find me alone, which I have studiously avoided; for, by heavens, Charles, I dare not meet her just upbraidings, conscious as I am of the wrong I have done her; I shrink before her reproving eye, nor can I much longer support my humiliating situation.—I shall shortly withdraw myself from a place where every face looks solemn at my approach; for both the old Lords have had discernment enough to discover that Lady Ann is displeased with me, and they imagine they must be so too.—I have not yet determined what road I shall take, but it is most likely I shall make Armstrong's my resting place, as it is in the vicinity of Belvidere Hall, from whence I must draw all my future repose—write to me, but no sermonizing

I beseech

I beseech you, it can answer no good purpose, physic comes too late when the man is dead—Adieu, Charles ! direct to me here—I shall give orders to have my letters sent after me.—Once more ; no lectures, for I need not your reproof to convince me I am acting the part, of (I had almost said) a villain—Farewell ! if, after this you will acknowledge me,

I am yours,

more than my own,

HENRY FAULKLAND.

12 13

MISS

VILLEROY.

MISS BEVIL

to

MISS MORDAUNT.

HAH—ha—ha—poor Caroline! So you never play or sing so well, as when accompanied by Mr. Faulkland—From my heart, I believe you—And what do you sing about? love and nonsense, I will lay my life.—But pray, has Lady Belvidere recovered the loss of this Phoenix yet? what a happiness! you are unconcerned

unconcerned at his absence, you can comfort her Ladyship so charmingly—little hypocrite that you are! or is it that you do not know that you are in love with this Faulkland?—This may possibly be, and in that case it would be wrong in me to let you remain in error; therefore I warn you to look to your heart, which if not already lost, is in the utmost danger.

—Now I would advise you to lose no time in driving this usurper from your thoughts—forget him—yes, forget him, ere it be too late; this is my counsel, and you may depend on it I have good reasons for giving it. In the first place, I don't like your Hero's character, he is too perfect, he seems by your description to have no faults, and such a being must, in my opinion, be very insipid. In the next place,

place, you are a very improper person to be in love; you are so gentle, so tender, and so sentimental, that I question whether ever you would have spirit to contradict, even your husband, but if he should behave ill to you, instead of retaliating, you would sit down contentedly and break your heart—This would never do, you must not be in love:—It is only such beings as me that should meddle with that passion, I that could play with it without hurting myself, just skim the surface, without tasting of the dregs; amuse myself with the object as long as I found him humble and tractable, and shake him off the moment he became importunate or troublesome.—There is some sense in this, but with your romantic notions it would be destruction, absolute

lute destruction, so think no more of Faulkland : your last letter shewed me the bad effects it has already had upon you, for never was any thing so wild as your proposal of spending our time when I should arrive at Belvidere Hall—Rising before the sun, climbing up hills at its zenith, walking by moon-light, and listening to the warbling of birds ; and to say that we preferred this mode of passing our time, to being encompassed with earthly gods and goddesses—No Caroline, you may tell such fabulous stories if you please, but I beg to be excused, I have been brought up to love truth, and my conscience will not allow me to join you in any thing so far removed from it.

You must offer my most respectful gratitude to your noble friend for her obliging

obliging invitation, which I hope to avail myself of some future day, but the wishes of a parent to detain me, will not at this time admit of paying my thanks in person.—Oh ! Caroline, what a proof of self-denial do I give in yielding to my mother's intreaty, what a proof of preferring her happiness to my own.—I must sorely possess a great mind to be capable of such an effort.—How just did that poet think, who said, “some strange comfort every state attends” —for I feel a sort of satisfaction in having obliged her, though nothing can alter my opinion of the prodigious unreasonableness of her requesting such a sacrifice from me.—But I am determined to think with Candidus, that all is for the best ; for I have hopes, sometime hence you may think more rationally than

than at present you do, when of course we shall pass our time more pleasant than we can do now.—I beg you to recollect that for these ten long months I have been confined to a castle, and surrounded with heroes that never were coxcombs, and heroines who would have thought it a disgrace ever to faint.—Now this feat of the Baronet's ancestors has entirely destroyed the few favourable ideas I entertained of a country life, and I shall most gladly change the society of these wigged gentry who never speak, to the conversation of these flatterers who are always speaking and yet say nothing—Therefore, dear girl, I shall be obliged to you, to change your moon-light walk for a saunter through a Ball-Room: this is the only walking that does not tire me, besides

sides I am convinced the air of such a place would agree with me, but I could never endure the night air—Another thing, the singing of nightingales is too loud for me, it makes my head ach—A full band of music suits my weak nerves better, wherefore, from motives of humanity you must comply with my request—Enclosed, you will find the bill your generosity had destined for Sabina and her husband—most sorry I am to say, she cannot benefit by your bounty—those unfortunates have left the country, but whither gone, my continual search has not been able to discover—Should my future exertions prove more successful, I shall look upon you as my banker, and in so doing I shall lay you under obligations to me, and thus repay part of the gratitude

gratitude I feel for the proof you have given of your affection, in so liberally enabling me to fulfil what was not only my inclination, but my duty to do.

Farewell !

HARRIET BEVIL.

MISS MORDAUNT

TO

MISS BEVIL.

MY soul hath its content so absolute, that not another comfort like to this succeeds in unknown fate."—Harriet, my prayers are heard, the most fervent wish of my heart is gratified and I am happy—I shall not anticipate the joyful intelligence, but if my feelings will let me, I will conduct you through the circumstances

cumstances that led to the most blissful moment of my checkered life:—Some evenings since, I attended Lady Belvidere on a visit; in the course of the conversation, the mistress of the house told one of her guests, that she expected the new married couple—One of the gentlemen remarked, that she would then see the most melancholy and least happy bridegroom he had ever known. Several of the company joined in the conversation, by which I learned that the gentleman spoke of, had sacrificed his inclination to the interests of his family, by marrying a lady, for whom, in the beginning of life, he had conceived a great aversion, which had induced him to refuse the repeated offers she had made him of her hand.—

It was the general opinion, she did not

possess any qualities that were likely to change his sentiments in her favour—The compromise of a law suit, on which the peace and fortunes of a brother depended, had prevailed on him to form an engagement, from which he could expect nothing but misery, as both their heads and hearts were widely different, his being in all respects the best, while hers were weak, depraved, and revengeful.—At this moment the door opened, and Colonel Villeroy was announced—Ah, Harriet! never, never shall I forget the sensation I felt! yet it was something I cannot describe, it shot through my heart and brain—I remained fixed to my chair, with my eyes strained, to survey the stranger—I was observed by a young lady, who tapped me with her fan, and told

told me I must not fall in love with that gentleman, as he was married, and the very bride-groom who had been the subject of conversation—She then asked me, if I did not think him monstrous handsome, but she was certain I must, as every one said he was a divine creature: not a lady but envied Lady Susan; for all that, he did not care a farthing for her, for she was monstrous ugly and old fashioned in her dress—She had now run herself quite out of breath, and without waiting for any reply, hurried away to say perhaps the same thing to a dozen others—Her silly remarks had, however, awakened me from the stupefaction I had been in—Most of the company were by this time engaged at the different card tables—I had before declined playing, and retired

to a corner of the room, where, finding myself unnoticed, I drew from my bosom the miniature of my father, which had been bequeathed to me by the dying Lady Frances.—The likeness was perfect—not a feature could be mistaken—even time had made less alteration than could have been supposed, from the number of years which had elapsed.—A look of sorrow, which the original could not conceal, was the most striking difference between the two faces—the picture was painted in all the gay exultation of youth.—I was interrupted in my employment and comparison, by Lady Belvidere calling to me with a voice of surprise.—I hastened to the table where she played.—Colonel Villeroy leaned over the opposite chair, attending her partners cards.—My benefactress,

safrets, laughing, as I drew near, said, pray Caroline Mordaunt, favour the company with the object of your meditations since you retired into that corner.—At the words, Caroline Mordaunt, Villeroi raised his eyes to my face; they met mine; he hastily withdrew them but they fell on the picture that hung at my bosom, which in my hurry to attend on her Ladyship, I had forgot to return to its place of concealment—He started, and exclaimed, Merciful God! every feeling of my heart was before strained to the utmost; this was more than nature could bear; I fell lifeless on the floor—On my recovery, I cast my eyes around in vain, in search of the father, whose blessing I would have died to receive, but he was not there.—I found myself in another

F 4 apartment,

apartment, encompassed with females only.—The anxiety of my benefactors, next called for my attention—I endeavoured to remove her uneasiness, by making light of my illness, and proposed returning to the company, but she insisted on going home, as she was apprehensive of a relapse—I obeyed, and was put to bed as soon as I arrived—Her Ladyship remained with me, declaring she could not leave me until convinced of my recovery. To shew her I was better, I entered into conversation, and expressed my uneasiness at the confusion I had occasioned.—Lady B. broke out into the highest commendations of the humanity of Colonel Villeroy, who, she said, had been the first to observe my illness, and that an exclamation from him, had given
the

the company notice of my situation ; that he had conveyed me in his arms to another room, where he appeared in the greatest agitation and distress, looking stedfastly in my face until he saw me recover, then left the house.—It was late before my kind patroness would leave me, but sleep had fled my pillow, and I passed a night of most anxious disquietude—One moment I painted to myself the exquisite happiness I should enjoy, in being the object of a father's fondest affection—The next, I shuddered at the idea of being received, perhaps, with coldness and aversion.—I now was terrified by the thought that I might never see him more : at length, worn out with fatigue, I sunk into a slumber, when the wanderings of my disturbed imagination

still continuing, the most horrid visions occupied my mind—I thought myself in a vast place, filled with distracted persons.—Amidst the confusion of objects, I could clearly discern the dead body of my father covered with wounds, and all bloody.—As I ran to embrace it, Faulkland prevented me, and holding a poniard to my bosom, bid me prepare to follow that wretch, pointing to the mangled corpse, and boasting himself the murderer.—Shocked and terrified, I broke from his hold, and fled, when I found myself in a wilderness, unable to determine what path to take, until my mother, exactly as I last saw her, appeared, and beckoned to me to follow—just as I was preparing to obey, the voice of my Harriet, conjuring me not to leave her, kept me still
irresolute,

irresolute, when my mother, approaching, covered me with a veil, and bore me away in her arms; the loved voice of my friend still pursuing me in accents of sorrow and entreaty—my attempt to speak comfort to her, awoke me. — Never did the light of heaven appear so glorious as at this moment; the sun shone in my window, I was tempted to turn idolater, and worship it in return for the healing and chearful thoughts with which its brightness had inspired me.—I arose, and prostrating myself before my Creator, poured out the acceptable tribute of a grateful heart, for the blessings innumerable with which he had encompassed me. What poor beings we are, my Harriet, that cannot be sensible of the charms of prosperity, until we have tasted of the cup of adversity.

adversity. — Escaped from terrors, which my dread had occasioned; I saw the numberless mercies I received from the Giver of Life: I condemned all my former repinings as unjust, and considered myself as the happiest of human beings. — Relieved from the soul-affrighting idea of seeing an expiring parent, and the blood-stained hands of the murdering Faulkland. I felt a lightness of heart and security of mind, I had never before experienced — I may say with Romeo, “My bosom, Lord, fits lightly on his throne,” and all this day an unaccustomed spirit lifts me above the ground with cheerful thoughts. Lady Belvidere, finding I was up, came into my room, and expressed the utmost joy at seeing me so well recovered. — As soon as we had

breakfasted,

breakfasted, she proposed taking the air ; we had not drove twenty yards from the house, when Colonel Villeroy passed the carriage, looking wishfully in—Her Ladyship did not see him, but as we returned home, he again passed and very near us—Lady B. now saw him, and let down the glass and bowed—He immediately approached, and in the most respectful manner, enquired after the health of the Lady, whose illness the preceding evening, had very much shocked him.—He found means, during the conversation, to put a note into my hand unobserved ; which having done, he took his leave—On my entering the house, I flew to my apartment, eager to learn the contents of the note—it contained these words :

“ The

“The name of Caroline Mordaunt, which you bear, the picture that you wear in your bosom of the ill-fated Villeroi, your amazing resemblance to an adored woman, whose loss I must ever lament ; but above all, the affection which throbs in my heart towards you, convinces me you are my child : that child, whose uncertain existence, has marked my melancholy hours with anxiety and doubt—
Oh ! fly then, I conjure you, to the arms of your father, a father who dies to press you to his bosom, to call you his, to acknowledge the only treasure of his long-widowed heart, and to learn by what mysterious turn of fortune he finds you receiving protection from the sister of Lord Henly.—I shall remain near the house till I have conversed with you ;
come

come then, my Caroline, come quickly to your expecting parent, bless him, and be blessed.

MORDAUNT VILLEROY.

To you, my Harriet, I need not describe the joy, the extacy in finding myself in possession of that which my prayers had so long importuned Heaven to grant me, the affection of a father; your own feelings will best instruct you what mine must be — I will likewise have you to conceive my impatience till the long expected hour arrived. — Fortunately, Lady B. had a large company, which I knew must engage her attention, as she had insisted that I should not, as usual, do the honour of the house, but retire as soon as I felt fatigued — I early availed myself of
this

this permission, and with eager steps, passed through the garden, from whence a gate, of which I had previously procured the key, opened into the road—Good heaven! how did I tremble, as I unlocked it, which as soon as I had done, I retired into an arbour that was near, with an intent to recover myself, but I had hardly reached it when I saw my father running towards me; I sprung from my seat to meet him, and was instantly in his arms—It was an awful moment.—As soon as the tumult of our passions was over, I recited to this beloved parent, the whole account of my hapless mother's wretchedness and death, and events which had occurred to throw me under the protection of Lady Belvidere—He expressed the utmost astonishment at the recent death of
Lady

Lady Frances, as he had received the letter which that regretted parent mentions in the narrative of her disastrous life, having been through mistake sent to England, informing him of her death, and the possibility of my existence— Since which, he has wandered over half the world in a fruitless search to find some trace that might guide him to discover me, if I still survived. — He now entered into a detail of his circumstances, and marriage, of which the conversation I have before related, gave but too true a picture—He lamented with tears of the bitterest anguish the severity of our fates, which rendered it impossible for him to claim me as his child ; not only from his own evil destiny in being wedded to, and dependant on, a woman incapable of one
generous

generous feeling; but also in regard to my revered benefactor, Doctor Smith, which shut out all hope, at least during his life, of his declaring himself my father.—

After three hours spent in mutual proofs of affection, in relating our different stories and planning our future conduct, we parted, with promises to meet as often as opportunity would serve.—I went, unobserved, to my room, where I passed the night in the most comfortable reflections on the happiness I had enjoyed, except that sometimes the cruel dream of the past morning, would interpose and fill my mind with horror—I am almost ashamed to confess to you my Harriet, but I know not how it is, this dream sits heavy on my spirits as often as it intervenes, which is much too frequent; yet

I strive

I strive to drive it from my mind — I innumerate the blessings that are poured on me, I reflect on the Father, it has pleased heaven to restore me, still the dream obtrudes, notwithstanding the pleasure that fills my breast, while I contemplate that if ever Virtue's child had cause of pride, it is your Caroline; for never did I behold his equal, even Faulkland must yield to him.—If any thing could palliate the crime of Lady Frances, the irresistible powers of her accomplished seducer would plead strongly for her.

I have now, my Harriet, made you acquainted with the source of that content which the beginning of my letter informed you I enjoyed — Sure I am that you will partake of my happiness, happiness

ness that would be without a possibility of addition, were my adored father situated more suitably to his wishes and merits — but perfect felicity is not consistent with the lot of humanity; and shall I then repine that I am not exempted from the general fate? no, I will not repine, it is not for myself I feel, for I would most chearfully forego a part of the benefits I receive, might they serve to tranquilise the future hours of a parent. — I should now endeavour to acquit myself from the charge of hypocrisy, but I have already exceeded the bounds of the longest letter, I shall defer therefore till another day, my observations on that part of your letter.

Yours,

CAROLINE MORDAUNT.

MISS

VILLEROY.

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MISS CAROLINE MORDAUNT

TO

MISS BEVIL.

I TOLD you in my last letter, that I should hope to acquit myself of the heavy charge of hypocrisy, of which my friend seems to think me guilty; which I cannot do better than by laying before you the state of my heart at the time I incurred your suspicion, and also, at the moment I write this, trusting to your generosity

generosity not to weigh too minutely its failings, nor censure with too much severity, that weakness you yourself are no stranger to.—When I first became acquainted with Mr. Faulkland, I viewed him with the same admiration, I should have done a fine picture, placed at a distance from me; the real merit of which I could not possibly judge of, but from a closer examination—We were then surrounded by a crowd, therefore more than a superficial knowledge could not be acquired—I will allow the outlines to have been such as to promise to reward the strictest scrutiny—But could my Harriet suppose my heart so very easy of access, as to yield unsolicited, and to a stranger? She wronged it much, if she did: for though on a slight acquaintance I thought highly

highly of Mr. Faulkland, yet it was the certainty of his innate worth that first gave him an interest in that heart; nor at the time of my writing did I entertain warmer sentiments for him, than his personal accomplishments warranted.—I then informed you, that he was the only one of all our guests who remained—from this time it became my province to contribute all in my power to his amusement—He was satisfied with my humble exertions to please, and condescended to employ his valuable hours and vast abilities in entertaining and instructing your grateful friend—each day closed to me with regret, as the next promised the departure of my companion from Belvidere Hall; but the morning bountifully repaid my anxiety, by furnishing some pretext

pretext for delay till the next.—In this state your letter found me; it made me uneasy; I examined my heart, and found it totally occupied by Faulkland's perceptions—I saw the necessity, and was determined to drive them thence, as all who oppose nature generally do; I overacted my part, I was cold, restless, and affectedly polite.—Faulkland perceived the alteration, and as soon as we were alone, enquired the cause.—I denied any.—He said he saw that I was offended with him, and intreated me to tell him on what account.—I persisted in my first answer.—He let fall my hand, which he had taken, declaring he would that moment quit Belvidere Hall, as he could not remain in a place where he was to endure my displeasure.—I burst into tears, he threw

threw himself at my feet, conjuring me to inform him of the cause of my sorrow, as his happiness depended on mine. He proceeded to avow the most ardent passion, and solicited my love in return—ever too prone to reveal the feelings of my heart, could I now restrain? no, Harriet, had I the inclination, I possessed not the power—I laid it open before him; and he saw himself the idol of its fondest regards. Three days passed in the utmost happiness, but the fourth he received a mandate to attend his father, which he refused to obey, 'till I had first bound myself by a solemn and sacred vow to be none but his—This I could easily do, for worlds would not bribe me to be another's; yet I assured him, his Father's and Lady B's consent must sanc-

tion our union, or it never should take place. He left me, with a promise to return as soon as he could prevail on his father to dispense with his attendance; and I have just received a note from him that he has left the Earl, and is on a visit to a friend in the neighbourhood of Belvidere Hall—My Benefactors also has had a card, saying, he would wait on her this evening. This is no trifling addition to my happiness; for though his absence has been short, yet it has taught me the inestimable value of his company

—Yet, tell me, my friend, am not I wrong in thus resigning my heart to one, to whom there is so little prospect of my being ever united—for can it be supposed that the father of Faulkland will ever consent to his only son, the support of his
house,

house, forming an alliance with a nameless beggar, the needy dependant on Lady Belvidere, for as such I shall make myself known, nor any longer impose myself on the man my soul loves, for the relation of her ladyship — No! Harriet, though I were assured that Faulkland should be the vast reward of my silence, and by the discovery I should loose him for ever, I should not hesitate to make it; for never can I condescend to steal a second time into a family — I know from past experience, how dear the mean deception must cost me. I shall first acquaint my father with my intentions; I will then make known my real situation to Faulkland, leaving it to him to inform the Earl of the particulars of it: thus, my friend, am I at present situated — a short

time may confirm my happiness, or (but I will not anticipate) misfortune.—Have you yet discovered the retreat of the lovely Sabina—I impatiently look for the time when you will oblige me by making me useful; for I feel myself deeply interested in the fate of this young couple—they have proved themselves the friends of Harriet Bevil, and must of consequence be dear to

CAROLINE MORDAUNT.

CHARLES

CHARLES NEVIL, ESQ.

TO THE

HON. HENRY FAULKLAND

I HAVE been ever most sensibly affected, when I have beheld the deviation of a fellow-creature from the paths of honour and virtue; paths in which he had trod through life with unwearied perseverance, and by which he had obtained the adoration of his kindred, self-esteem, and the good opinion of the

G 3

worthy

worthy part of mankind — what must I then feel at finding the friend I most valued, the man whose principles I admired, and whose rectitude of conduct it has been my pride to imitate, fallen into such a situation.—It would be a vain attempt to describe the pain your last letter has given me, nor can it be wondered at; for in that letter I read the destruction, not only of your own happiness, but also the hopes of a noble family—I view years of well earned reputation, bartered for a toy—I hear a name, that was wont to be pointed out as a pattern for youth, now spoken of with derision, and held out as a warning, that they may shun the follies which the bearer of that once honourable name has unhappily fallen into. Listen to me, Faulkland, I conjure you, listen

listen to me ere it be too late; the advice I offer will restore you to peace, by reconciling you to yourself, with whom you confess you are now at variance.—Return to Lady Ann, atone for your past neglect by a speedy union.—This, she loves you too well to refuse; with her you will be happy.—She possesses beauty, virtue, riches, and affection, to satisfy the most desiring heart.—By acting thus, you will prove a blessing to your father, an honour to your family, and Nevil will be still proud to say, he is the friend of Faulkland.—I have shewn some part of the felicity that is within your reach, and to obtain which, you have only to act as a dutiful son, and a man of honour.—Suffer me now to suppose (but may heaven avert it) that you have followed

G 4

your

your inclination, and married the present object of your choice—we will allow her all the virtues and accomplishments, with which your heated imagination has adorned her; still you would be far from happiness, as your father's diminished fortune, were he even inclined to share it with you, would ill support the splendour to which you have been used: and your heart would be filled with regret at seeing the woman you had sought to exalt, depressed by poverty, and treated with that neglect which is too often attended on the want of affluence. — But we will vary the scene, and conclude, that your justly injured father will not be reconciled to a step, which will so cruelly destroy his every hope: and this, Faulkland, will assuredly be the case; for engaged as he is

to

to the father of Lady Ann, how could he with honour acknowledge any other woman than his daughter, as the wife of his son. But perhaps you think if the son could condescend to act dishonourably, the father might be brought to follow his example—This will not be; the Earl has too high a sense of what is due to his word, ever to pardon the man who by his instability and folly, has been the cause of his breaking it. Thus, you see, inevitable ruin must follow your marriage with this destitute orphan, of you know not who.—I have as yet concluded her possessed of every virtue that can adorn her sex; will you forgive me, if I suppose it possible that the eye of the husband may be more quick-sighted, than that of the lover; and that a more intimate

G 5 acquaintance

acquaintance may convince you that you have been mistaken, and that you have misconceived art for innocence, vanity for humility—follow me a little farther; view her disappointed in the hopes she had formed of splendour and greatness: instead of shining in every gay circle, and being the admiration of the world, she finds herself compelled to retire from it, with no other companion than the man who has deceived her—Will not upbraiding, and discontent take place of tenderness and good humour? Yes, though you rescued her from a slavish dependance, she will repine at the change, that excludes her from the resorts of fashion and dissipation:—Reflect, if in this situation you could be happy; would you not turn your thoughts to that which you have

have lost, lost by your own misconduct? and would not the retrospect bring to your mind the woman whose heart you had torn, whose peace your perfidy had destroyed. Once more I conjure you to reflect on what you are about to do.—Ask yourself of what value life will be, when over-whelmed with poverty, branded by dishonour, and imbittered by disappointment and the keenest regret.

If what I have said will not awaken you from the dream of passion into which you have fallen, nothing I could add will have any effect; I shall therefore only request, should your better judgement, or my advice, lead you back to the paths of rectitude that you have quitted, that you will glad my heart with the earliest

G 6 possible

possible intelligence; if otherwise, you will be silent: I shall then conclude that the man is indeed dead, and that all medicine must fail.—Among the many who will lament your fall, none will be found a more sincere mourner than him who has ever loved you with the fondness of a brother, and who with truth subscribes himself,

Your faithful Friend,

CHARLES NEVIL.

HON.

WILLEROY.

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HON. H. FAULKLAND,

TO

CHARLES NEVIL, ESQ.

HERE I am at my Father's,
ready to fulfill every wish of his heart—
Twelve hours since, I left Belvidere
Hall, never to return. Oh! Charles, I
am undone: that woman whom my love-
sick fancy had painted an angel of light,
has proved to be a fiend of darkness, and
has undone me; yet, how undone me?
have

have I not escaped from her snares? yes I have, and I will forget her—Gracious God! did I say, forget her? Oh! Caroline, I find that you are grown to my heart; but I will tear you thence—Yes most abandoned, most perfidious of your sex, I will tear you thence, though the life blood should follow—I rave, Charles, but I will endeavour to be calm; for I wish to acquaint you with what has befallen me since I gave you the account of my ill-fated passion.

I have read over your letter which I found waiting my return, as I had forgot to give directions to have it sent after me—A few hours past, it would have levered a friendship of twenty years growth: it has now added a cement, that no future

future event can dissolve—It has pointed out the path to honour, and I will pursue it. Once more, thou faithful counsellor, let me peruse thy precepts—I have done so, and am now quite composed and prepared for the ceremony, which an hour hence is to be performed—I will spend the interval in relating the horrid discovery which has involved me in eternal misery: the recital will strengthen my hatred and resentment against the base destroyer of my peace.

Two days after I wrote you, I repaired to Armstrong's, from whence I acquainted Lady Belvidere with my intentions of renewing my visit to her—this I did the same day—I found the idol of my soul impatiently expecting me; we were but a
few

few moments alone, but these were employed in mutual protestations of unalterable love. — I passed an evening of most exquisite delight; the last, Nevil, I shall ever know. The next morning, while we were at breakfast, a servant brought Miss Mordaunt a letter — Lady Belvidere told her, while she was reading it, that she fancied it was from a favourite by her blushing — I, laughing, begged to see it, that I might, if it was a love-letter, improve by its contents, should I have occasion to write to my mistress — so saying, I snatched it from her: — Alarmed beyond description, she seized my arm, and with wildness in her manner, exclaimed, not for the world, Faulkland! and tearing it suddenly from me, part remained in my hand, which with the same

same violence she regained. At this moment a visitor arrived ; she hastily put the cause of our contest into her pocket and ran to receive the stranger. Her unaccountable earnestness to conceal the paper, excited in me a desire to know its contents ; and I was rejoiced to find that in her hurry to hide it, she had dropped it on the floor, without knowing she had done so—I conveyed it away unseen by any one, and likewise a small piece that had been torn from it, on which was written — Villeroy. On examining the baneful contents, to my torture, I found it as follows ; for it is deeply engraven on my heart, therefore I cannot have forgot it.

“ Best

"Best beloved of my soul, my wife has this day gone to town, and we may without hazard indulge ourselves with an interview—Come, then, my Caroline, let me again press you to my doating bosom, these are the only moments in which existence is not a burthen to me—Oh! that I could stand forth and claim you as my own, or even take you from dependance; but my cursed marriage has shut out every hope, and I am doomed to behold my heart's treasure, she who is entitled to my name, fortune and protection, thrown on the generosity of one, on whom she has not the smallest claim of kindred or connection--You know not how those thoughts corrode my peace; but your presence will dispell the gloom that now hangs over me:—Come, then, and in your arms I will

will forget every care, and only remember, that I am your fond,

Your idolizing,

—”

Here the paper was wanting, by which a word or two was lost, but which imagination can easily supply, before the ever accursed name of Villeroy was added.

The effect this infernal production had on me, rendered me for some time incapable of determining what course to pursue. In the first paroxysms of my rage, my soul thirsted for revenge, and I vowed to satiate it: but my cooler judgement shewed me that vengeance was beneath me, and I resolved to leave the wretched girl

girl to the stings of her own conscience? — I was now summoned to dinner, but sent an excuse that I was not very well, but would attend the tea table — In the evening I accordingly went down at the accustomed hour, and was received with every mark of the most anxious tenderness by the beautiful hypocrite, to a close observance of whose conduct, my whole attention was riveted. — When tea was over, I requested her to favour me with playing some of my favourite airs — She complied, but not with her usual cheerfulness — She was evidently uneasy, looking at her watch, then out of the window, as if to observe, if evening had let fall her curtain sufficient to shadow a deed that would not bear the light — Never, never, may you my friend, experience the pangs

I felt

I felt during this dreadful hour, sometimes I felt a gleam of hope that she would not meet her seducer; the next moment extinguished it, and I saw her burning with impatience to be in his arms. She at length put an end to my suspense by leaving the harpsichord, saying, she had a letter to write—With a trembling voice I urged her to give me one half hour more; but she excused herself, promising to return before long, adding in a lower accent, her ladyship will retire early, I shall then ask the whole attention of my Faulkland to something that concerns us both—with these words she left the room—I walked to a window which faced the garden, and a moment after saw her enter it—A sudden impulse excited me to follow. She hurried to an arbour—the
villain

villain was already there ; she threw herself into his arms—I saw him, Nevil, with transport embrace her—My desire of revenge returned, I drew my sword with intention of plunging them into perdition, but my strength and senses forsook me, I fell to the earth : on my returning to life, I repaired to the harbour, but they were gone.—Scarcely knowing what I did, I went to the stable, and taking my horse, desired the groom to acquaint Lady Belvidere, that indispensable business called me instantly away, and giving orders for my servant to follow me, I rode off, nor did I stop till I reached this place.—My father was still in bed—I presented myself before him, telling him, I was willing to espouse Lady Ann, provided the ceremony was immediately performed. He appeared

peared astonished, but rose and went to the chamber of her father—After a short time he returned with the information that Lady Ann would forget my past conduct, and accept me on my own terms—He then advised me to retire and compose myself, of which, he observed I stood much in need—He promised to excuse me to my intended bride, and said that in an hour he should expect me to attend at the altar: so here I am awaiting the awful moment that will place an insurmountable barrier between me and the faithless Caroline—I am called—Nevil, adieu ! I go to entitle myself to your friendship, and to the approbation of that world on whose opinion you place so high a value. I shall not close this till my return.

Charles,

Charles, it is over—I am the husband of Lady Ann Ormond—may it make her happy!—I care not what becomes of

FAULKLAND.

MISS

MISS MORDAUNT

TO

MISS BEVIL.

I KNOW the heart of my Harriet will grieve for her friend, when she is told that Faulkland has deserted her, and is wedded to another — Yes, Harriet, I have lost him, and the heart-breaking intelligence reached me three days since; yet, till this moment, I could not collect fortitude enough to acquaint you with it.

VOL. II.

H

In.

In my last I informed you of his intended visit—he came—his words and actions bespoke him the most tender, ardent, and faithful lover; but both were counterfeited—to answer what purpose, I cannot conjecture, lest it should prove unfavourable to the man I have loved, and still wish to esteem.—The day after his arrival he excused himself attending at dinner, by complaining of a slight indisposition, but gave us his company at tea—I remarked that his spirits were dejected and his manner embarrassed, but imputed it to his not being well—After the tea was removed, he led me to the harpsichord, requesting me to play; which I did with some reluctance, as I had received a letter from my father, appointing me to meet him in the evening, and I was too anxious to see him

him and fearful of keeping him waiting, to be pleased with any thing that detained me at this time. — After a short time I withdrew, under pretence of writing letters, but hastened to the garden, where I found my expecting parent, who with sorrow informed me, he must leave me very soon as Lady Susan had unexpectedly returned home, and her watchful jealousy could not be too much guarded against. — We parted much sooner than the wishes of either would have allowed, and I retired to my room, disappointed and uneasy — I had intended to acquaint my father of my situation with regard to Faulkland, but the time would not admit of it — I had also told Faulkland I had something to communicate to him that night, which promise I could not now fulfil — I

felt an awkwardness at the thought of meeting him, that for some time prevented my seeking his company; but at length descending, I found Lady Belvidere alone—I enquired for her guest, and was informed he had disappeared a minute after me; her Ladyship added, with a smile, that she did not doubt but he would soon return now—She had hardly uttered those words, when a servant entered, and delivered a message he had received from Mr. Faulkland, apologising for his abrupt departure, which was occasioned by business that would not admit of delay—This a good deal surprized us, but it was increased by Faulkland's servant inquiring to know where his master had said he was going, as he had left orders for him to follow immediately, but had left no directions

directions where—My Patroness was of opinion that he was engaged in some affair of honour—I instantly adopted the idea with all its attendant horrors, and passed a night of the most restless anxiety—nor did the ensuing day dissipate my cares. His servant returned to the hall, having in vain sought his master among the neighbouring gentry who he visited, none of which could give any tidings of him. Our conjectures on this mysterious conduct, were equally various and distant from the truth, which the next day convinced us of, by the arrival of a Mr. Armstrong, a friend of Faulkland's, who acquainted Lady Belvidere that he had that morning received a letter from the Earl, informing him of his son's marriage with Lady Ann Ormond, to whom

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it seems he had been some time engaged : Mr. Armstrong spoke of it as a match that promised every happiness to his friend as the Lady is beautiful, rich, accomplished and amiable, and had long placed her whole affections on him.

Fortunately for me, I was not present at the recital, but received the intelligence from my ever kind benefactress, after Mr. Armstrong had departed :—Her manner of disclosing it to me, convinced me she had suppositions of its being of consequence to me, though she did not wish me to think so, gentle and tender as the disclosure was, it has left an impression on my heart no time can efface ; yet I did not shed a tear. Lady Belvidere took my hand, requesting me to attend her to the garden ;

garden; I silently obeyed:—As she supported me up the walk, she talked of the happiness she enjoyed from my society, and the vast obligations she was under for my hourly proofs of affection. She then, with solemnity of voice and countenance, thanked Heaven for having given me to her, to comfort her in the decline of life.—She took occasion thence to comment on the divine goodness of the Creator, who was ever ready to heal the wounds of the virtuous heart, even when we ourselves judged them to be beyond cure—further she observed, that resignation under affliction was a duty to him as well as to ourselves. Her salutary discourse had the effect she wished; it caused me to weep—again she mentioned the marriage of Faulkland, spoke highly of

H 4

Lady

Lady Ann, wished she might be as happy as her long attachment merited ; for should her choice prove unworthy, the loss of her peace must follow, as the length of time she has loved him, united to her duty to continue to do so, will make it impossible for her to conquer an affection that has grown a part of her very being ; even though she should be sensible that the object was undeserving.—How disferent would be her state had her passion been of a short date, and had she not bound herself by ties which nothing but death can separate—it would then become her duty to withdraw her regard from the man who had forfeited all right to her good-will, and she would rejoice that her wishes for their being united, had not been granted, she would not regret the loss
of

of a heart she could no longer esteem—I felt every word she uttered, and my reason acknowledged the justness of, but refused to adopt the wholesome advice—I kissed the hand of my venerated instructor, and withdrew to ask of Heaven that fortitude I stood in need of, and to give vent to the anguish which swelled my bosom, a bosom so lately the abode of hope and serenity; how different, Harriet, from the present moment. Oh! Faulkland, what could tempt you to trample on the peace of a poor creature, who, even while her heart bleeds from the wounds you have given it, petitions Heaven for your happiness, nor wishes to disturb your tranquility by the recollection of her ill-requited love?—May the woman whom you have thought worthy

H 5
of

of your hand, be happy too ; I shall then exult that I did not separate two hearts formed for each other — indeed Harriet, that thought gives me comfort, for I could not have known repose, even in the arms of Faulkland, had I known my being there planted a thorn in the bosom of Lady Ann Ormond : — I need not tell my friend how acceptable her company would be at this time to her

Affectionate

C. MORDAUNT.

MISS

VILLEROY.

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MISS BEVIL.

TO

MISS MORDAUNT.

Give sorrow words : the grief that does not speak,
Whispers the o'er-fraught heart, and bids it break:

O H! that I could communicate part of the rage which swells my bosom, to the gentle breast of my friend ; I should not then tremble as I now do for repose — Base ungenerous Faulkland ! infamous wretch, thus to steal into the

H 6 noblest

noblest heart only to plunder it of a treasure by which you were not enriched, and that you meant to abandon as soon as obtained. May every succeeding hour of your life be embittered by the recollection of what you have lost! May; but I will restrain my ineffectual wishes, for my curses cannot reach him; if they could, they should never cease, till the heart his perfidy has torn, was made whole, and no more remembered that the Hypocrite ever existed. — Teach me, kind Heaven, the power of persuasion; direct me to the bosom of my Caroline; aid me to pluck the barbed arrow thence, nor let one atom of the lurking poison remain behind to disturb her tranquility — Your letter, my sweet friend, has filled me with alarms — There is an uncomplaining stillness throughout,

throughout, which makes me (acquainted as I am with the too great sensibility of the writer) in terror for your safety — Had you execrated the cause of your distress and loudly proclaimed his baseness, I should have been comforted; for I should then look forward to time to mitigate your sorrows — but the calmness with which you have related your wrongs has filled me with fears; and were it not for the hope that your great sense of religion and affection for those to whom you are dear, will make you exert your fortitude on this trying occasion, I should despair of your restoration to happiness — Oh! disappoint not this darling hope, nor delay the fulfilling of it; for in a mind like yours, every moment that the remedy is neglected, will give strength to
the

the disease, till its corroding quality saps the foundation and makes the whole fabrick to totter.

A very few weeks will, I trust, bring me to the society so much longed for—
Let me find you such as you were when you last parted from

Your

HARRIET BEVIL.

HON.

HON. H. FAULKLAND,

TO

CHARLES NEVIL, ESQ.

WHY did you leave me, Nevil? if you have any regard for me, return. I am not fit to be trusted to myself—The state of calm stupidity in which you saw me during the last month, no longer remains: it has given place to frenzy and despair—Hear the cause of this unhappy alteration, which I know you will

will condemn ; but I am too much weighed down with calamity, to fear the addition of your displeasure. — Guided by your advice, I accompanied Lady Ann to Wentworth's, where a very large number of flutterers of both sexes were assembled — the amusement for the evening was dancing : — Finding there was an equal number of males and females without me, I kept out of the way till the ball commenced, then taking my seat in a corner of the room I endeavoured to be entertained with what was passing — I was joined by Wentworth, who was witty upon the Benedict, and boasted how differently he had acted when of my age ; he was interrupted by a servant who told him Lady Belvidere was arrived — He hurried away, leaving me in a state impossible to be described ;

scribed ; nor can I tell whether I wished or dreaded most that she should be attended by Miss Mordaunt—I had not much time to decide, for he soon returned leading in her Ladyship, followed by the once loved Caroline ; once loved, yes, once and for ever.—While they were paying their compliments to Mrs. Wentworth, he came, and seizing my arm, he dragged me to where they stood vociferating, you are a lucky dog ; such an idle fellow does not deserve such a partner. He then presented me to Miss Mordaunt, desiring we would lose no time, as the dance was nearly over—How she received me, I know not, for I dared not take my eyes from the ground—I took her hand, it trembled exceedingly—we joined the dance, through which I blundered with

with infinite difficulty—when she left me to join her Ladyship, I withdrew into the air, and soon recovered myself sufficiently to return to the company—I now ventured to address myself to Lady Belvidere, and apologised for the manner that I had left her house—She coolly replied, that there was not the least occasion for it, as greater incivilities must be overlooked, when the heart was so deeply and differently engaged as mine at that time was, particularly as Lady Ann Ormond was the object I had in view—Her malice had all the effect she could have desired, it flung me to the soul—I was on the point of declaring that my heart was no ways interested in what concerned Lady Ann: Wentworth's calling to me to take out my partner, prevented

vented my exposing my wife and myself. I asked if it would be agreeable to Miss Mordaunt to join the dance, she said yes, and gave me her hand:—Our being at the bottom of the set, left me at liberty to observe what passed—I perceived that the eyes of the company were fixed with admiration on my partner—nor could it be otherwise—for never did I behold any thing so lovely. She appeared a perfect divinity—her behaviour was calm and collected—her spirits were neither elevated or depressed—sweet serenity seemed to accompany every action:—Why was this, Nevil? Why was the guilty Caroline tranquil, while the guiltless but injured Faulkland was a prey to misery? Is this the reward that virtue prepares for her votaries? Is it thus she repays the sacrifices

fices offered at her shrine, by giving fresh wounds to the already bleeding victim? yes, such are the gifts with which she has loaded me who never deviated intently from her paths, and who, to satisfy her demands, have bound myself a voluntary wretch—but I must not think, lest I should curse the virtue that has undone me.—The dance being finished, I conducted her to her seat, and placed myself next to her—she was engaged by Mr. L—— for the two next dances; I could have killed him for his presumption. On his leaving her, she was adorned in a very distant and respectful manner by a gentleman, who was a stranger to me, and little less I believed to her, yet I thought she seemed agitated—He was not very young, but his person

was

was majestically beautiful, and his manner possessed a something that commanded your respect, while its softness insinuated itself into the heart—I never before was so struck with the appearance of any man, and on his retiring, I eagerly asked his name; guess my horror and astonishment, when she answered that she believed it was Villeroi—I was struck dumb; every faculty was suspended, but she was so studiously inattentive to me that I might have expired beside her, and she would have been the last to have known it.—Mr.

L—— now claimed his promise and led her away, joy sparkling in her eyes, yes, Nevil, the ungrateful beauty was happy to be released from the company of the wretched Faulkland—Lady Ann approached; the sight of her was terrible;

to

to avoid it I left the room, and wandered through the garden, till the idea that Caroline might return home and I should see her no more, drove me back to the house—I spent the remainder of the evening drinking fresh draughts of poison.

—The company at last broke up, when, to the great delight of my soul, I found that Lady Belvidere as well as Lady Ann and myself were engaged to pass some days at this seat of festivity. It was late when we retired to our apartments; never were hours so tedious as those that intervened between my separating from, and again seeing the idol of my soul: knowing her to be an early riser, I went down before my usual time, in hopes of finding her alone, but was disappointed—She came not, till sent for—Her looks were

were more chearful than the night before.

After breakfast, by Wentworth's desire, I attended her to the harpsichord, but could not prevail on her to play other than lively music; but on Mr. L——, who came to enquire after the Ladies' healths, soliciting her, she sung in the most soul-moving manner. *Amer piu dolu assai*, an Italian air. — I in vain fought to find her alone; she never was from the side of Lady Ann, except when Mr. L—— was present, with whose attention she seemed pleased. Thus passed four days without my being able to see her, except in company—during this time she always appeared chearful, sometimes gay, and playful—to me she was rather distant, neither seeking or avoiding my conversation; to Lady Ann respectfully attentive, and

and to Mr. L——, who was seldom absent, affable and polite.—Worn out with expectation and disappointment, I determined to relinquish the hopes of seeing her in private, and unable longer to endure the preference she gave to Mr.

L——, I had resolved on leaving Wentworth's immediately, but an accident prevented my prudent designs; for on the fifth day, after breakfast, I had agreed to accompany my host, to give an opinion about a horse, which he was going to purchase—at a little distance from the house, we met a messenger coming to prevent our going till the next day—we returned back; Wentworth rode through his grounds, while I returned home, and alighting at the gate, passed through the lawn and flower garden, till coming near
an

an arbour, I perceived that Miss Mor-daunt was there alone — With an aching heart I softly advanced — Her back was towards me; she leaned on a table, and her hand held a miniature picture which she surveyed with great attention — A hope, that it might be one I had given her, for a moment seemed to give me new life; but alas! one view convinced me it was that of the ever-accursed Villeroy: — She kissed, and with a sigh that appeared to rend her heart, replaced it in her bosom, uttering at the same time, Cruel destiny! rage would no longer allow me to remain concealed, I entered the arbour, she arose in great confusion and attempted to fly — I caught her by the hand and led her back to the seat; she was pale and speechless, I feared she would faint — all

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my anger vanished ; I sat beside her, and in a soothing voice, entreated her to be composed, telling her I had eagerly sought the opportunity I had at last found of speaking to her alone, she said she could not form any idea of any matter that required secrecy between her and me ; but however as she was compelled to hear me, she hoped I would be expeditious, as she was in haste to attend Lady Ann Faulkland, who waited for her—A voluntary curse escaped me, at the name of my unfortunate wife, she looked surprized, and asked me with a stern voice, what are your commands with me ? I threw myself at her feet, saying, I had no commands, that my fate was in her hands, that I came to implore her mercy—with an air and tone of dignity, she said she thought

thought our fates were widely separated, nor could she now imagine how the husband of Lady Ann could be in a situation to receive mercy from the unportioned, untitled Caroline—I told her the husband of Lady Ann was a wretch, whose bosom was the seat of despair, that the unportioned, untitled Caroline had ruined the peace and broke the heart of that illfated man—She was affected, a tear stole down her cheek—No longer master of myself, I pressed her in my arms, and conjured her to fly with me and be mine, only mine; rage gave her strength, she spurned me from her, and with silent indignation and a look of intolerable contempt was leaving me, when with a frank voice I called to her to stop, adding, Villeroy shall repay me all my wrongs,

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I will

I will publish to the world his true character, I will make him known as the seducer,—She hasten'd back and kneeling to me, with streaming eyes and uplifted hands, said, I know not by what accident Faulkland, you have become master of this unhappy secret, but if Caroline was ever dear to you, let her prevail on you not to disclose it.—It is not for herself she pleads, Faulkland has already blighted all her prospects and made her future fate indifferent to her; but it is for Villeroy, for the man whose cup has long been filled with misery, and whom this discovery must crush for ever—Oh spare him Faulkland, in pity to his past sorrows and his great worth, spare him, spare Villeroy, spare my—I stopped her, I could not bear to hear her confess he was her lover—I raised

raised her from the ground, and bid her spare me, for though I knew of her guilty attachment to Villeroy, and his to her, I could not yet hear her confess it and live — I assured her, her shame should be confined to my own bosom, and that even her destroyer should escape my vengeance — Joy flashed from her eyes, yet I thought I saw contempt mingled with it; she attempted not to speak, I held both her hands in mine, intently gazing on her face; at this moment Lady Ann entered the arbour; she stood aghast — I rudely enquired what brought her there, she replied that she came to seek Miss Mordaunt, but finding her so much better engaged, she would not obtrude her unwelcome company any longer, and left us; Caroline was quite overcome, she sunk into a

scat and covering her eyes with her hands, remained motionless—My soul was shocked at her distress; I endeavoured to comfort her, by assurances that I would clear her innocence to my wife—She waved her hand to me to retire; I conjured her to let me support her to the house, as she appeared unable to walk, she looked indignantly at me, saying, No Sir, twice this day already have I been insulted by suspicions of crimes my soul abhors; I think you may be satisfied and not wish to add to them—what could she mean, Nevil? Lady Ann had certainly injured her by her unjust suspicions, but I knew of no other insult she had received—The Gardener at this time passing near us, she called him, and leaning on his arm walked slowly to the house—I saw her not again 'till

'till dinner, when to my great astonishment I saw her and Lady Ann enter together in perfect harmony with each other; she affected to be cheerful, but it evidently cost her much, her companion was melancholy and dejected; I can give you no description of myself; all within me was confusion, a chaos of love, shame, hope, despair, and hatred; envy, jealousy, and revenge; but love, all powerfull love, predominated.—This fatal interview had, if possible, encreased my passion, it had torn open wounds that had been in some degree healed, and which I had vainly expected time would cure; no time can bring me ease now, every hour encreases my torture, which, unless shortly alleviated, must end in a total deprivation of reason, but I will proceed.—The following evening

L4

Lady

Lady Belvidere mentioned her intentions of leaving us early the next morning.—I started, and exclaimed, good God! Madam, what do you say? she repeated her determination, and added, you seem surprised Mr. Faulkland—I replied, that her resolve was somewhat sudden, she said she supposed I should be the last who would be surprised at a sudden departure,—I felt the severity of her rebuke.—All the entreaties of our hospitable entertainers proved ineffectual to detain her, and I heard, with a kind of horror, the orders given to her servants to be in readiness.—The morning came, I arose and placed myself in sight of the room that contained all I prized in this world, with the hopes of once more speaking to her alone, though I knew not what I intended

tended to say—she did not come out till Lady Belvidere knocked at the door, desiring to know if she was ready—she instantly opened it, and accompanied her Ladyship to breakfast—I followed; the family were all assembled, and with them Mr. L——. The repast was solemn, the whole company seemed to partake of my melancholy, except the divine cause of it, she was in spirits, the carriage drove to the door, my heart died within me, Lady Belvidere rose and took a friendly leave of Mr. and Mrs Wentworth, was coolly polite to Lady Ann, myself and Mr. L——, Caroline withdrew with Lady Ann to a corner of the room, while the last mentioned approaching Lady Belvidere gave into her hand a letter requesting her to peruse it with attention, as his future happiness depended

depended on her answer, which he would hope to be favoured with as soon as possible.—Miss Mordaunt now paid her compliments with the same cheerfulness she had before maintained, then holding out her hand to Mr. L——. to hand her to the carriage, I seized it, and forgetting where I was, I pressed it to my bosom, exclaiming, that it was mine, and no earthly power should rest it from me, till the heart, her perfidy had broke, had ceased to beat.—She started from me and flew to the chaise which instantly drove off.—I followed with my eyes till the gross raillery of Wentworth brought recollection to my aid, and too late I saw how miserably I had exposed myself:—I retired to my room, whether Lady Ann imprudently followed me—
I feel

I feel ashamed to relate what passed, but be assured that you, Nevil, cannot more severely condemn my conduct than I myself do; it was base and unmanly, but as Hamlet somewhere says, "I hereby declare it was madness." On my first perceiving her enter my apartment, I endeavoured to quit it; she stepped between me and the door, saying, Faulkland, I will be heard—I pushed her rudely from me, when she threw herself on her knees, and catching hold of my coat, cried, I am your wife, Miss Mor-daunt never can be yours, forget her then, and give me that heart which she cannot accept.—I tore myself from her with such violence, that she fell prostrate on the floor, where I inhumanly left her: quitting the house, I wandered through the fields

fields till the approach of night—On my return, I was informed that Lady Ann had been taken suddenly ill and was very much indisposed, but wished to see me as soon as I returned home—With infinite reluctance I went to her bed-side, her pale, heart-broken countenance shocked me extremely, yet I was fullen and silent—she took my hand, and with a voice interrupted by frequent sighs, she asked, “What have I done Faulkland, to deserve your hatred? is it not wretchedness enough to know that you love another? must I be also the object of your aversion and contempt?” I no longer designed to conceal my sentiments, so unfeelingly replied, Lady Ann, your upbraidings are useless, they may inflame, but cannot soften me—It grieves me

me to be the cause of unhappiness to you, but I possess not the power to prevent it; our un auspicious marriage has been the bane of both of us. You saw my whole heart and soul devoted to another, yet you accepted my hand which a momentary frenzy offered to you, a frenzy created by despair—Oh! Lady Ann, it was imprudent, it was indelicate—what could you hope from such a marriage, a union dictated on one side by madness and by folly on the other? nothing but what it has produced, wretchedness to both—As for myself, I feel that I have eternally forfeited my tranquillity; I perceive that your ill-placed affection has undone me—She interrupted me—Alas! Faulkland, it has undone myself a life, (which I trust will be short one) of repentance must

must follow, all other atonement is beyond my reach, and that you will not accept of—yet so well do I think of your heart, that I am convinced, did you but know what mine suffers, you would at least pity me :—You, Faulkland, have never yet experienced the torture of unrequited love; you are indeed separated from Miss Mordaunt, but you possess her heart, while I waste my affections on a man who hates me for the very love I bear him.—I could not restrain myself from begging an explanation of her words, “ but you possess her heart” I demanded, what mean you, Lady Ann ? do I possess the heart of Miss Mordaunt ? Oh ! speak, tell me, I do ; give me life, say but that she loves me, and I will bless you while I have being.—With a smile, which bespoke more anguish,

guish than pleasure, she answered, "cruel Faulkland, I partake of your joy even while it commands me to despair, yes, Caroline loves you"—I wrung the hard confession from her at the moment when her anxiety to clear herself from my ungenerous suspicion, threw her off her guard: but what have you to hope from this knowledge? her soul is as faultless as her person—or what could tempt you to leave such a woman at the moment you might have made her yours—Oh! explain this mysterious conduct, and likewise say, why, not satisfied with destroying the peace of a fellow-creature by gaining her affection and then abandoning her, you sought out another victim, who you betrayed to misery, by dressing up inevitable ruin in the garb of felicity—
Say,

Say, why was the unfortunate Ann required to share the fate of a man from whose heart she was estranged; solve I conjure you this enigma, why was she made the murderer of your hopes and the suicide of her own happiness—I entreated her to spare me, that time would perhaps disclose the motive by which I had been actuated, but that I could not; I beseeched her to look upon me as a man unworthy of her regard; at the same time I promised to do all that my nature was capable of to render her life easy, and to conceal from the world my unhappy situation.—I passed the two following days with more calmness and serenity than I could have expected, cheered by the thought of Caroline's regard: I forgot her crime, or meanly founded my hopes

hopes upon it—like all my other hopes they were of short duration ; a visit from Mr. L—— shewed me they were fallacious, his countenance told the transport of his heart, when he desired to speak with Wentworth apart—Their conference was short—Wentworth returned alone, and too soon informed me what the dreadful secret was. The letter which Mr. L—— had given to Lady Belvidere the morning of her departure, and which till this moment I had forgot, was an offer of his hand to Miss Mordaunt.—The intelligence he now brought, was, that not only her Ladyship gave her consent, but that Miss Mordaunt accepted the proposal, and that he was gone to the Hall with the hopes of a speedy union—I shall pass over the manner I bore the infernal news,

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it would only add to the contempt you must already feel for me.—Armstrong was sent for and has brought me hither to my fathers; where the whole neighbourhood talks of nothing but the speedy alliance of two houses so long at deadly enmity with each other, as those of Lord Henley and Sir Robert L——. But think you that I will suffer it? my head turns giddy at the thought—No, never! never shall my Caroline be the prize of another—I will save her—from whom? from Villeroy—No, she is his already. what matters then whose she is?—My brain burns, I forget what I would say—Oh! this it is—I will protect this youth from her snares—it will be meritorious, it will be an act of justice—I will instantly about it: if I succeed, you shall hear from

from me—if not, conclude that Caroline is lost, and that Faulkland could not support the loss—in continuation—

“Faulkland’s himself again”—After a week of the most horrible suspense, I have this day learnt that my scheme has had the most unbounded success my wishes could have desired—it has separated the fates of L—— and my Caroline—ask me not what the means were by which I obtained so desirable an end, lest the crimson of my cheek should lead you to suspect that my heart disapproved of what my head had dictated:—I am too happy to add more than that I am your

FAULKLAND.

END OF VOL. II.





